McHARRY

John Reynolds

History

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JOHN REYNOLDS

BY

JESSIE McHARRY

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THESIS

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I HEREBY RECOMMEND THAT THE THESIS PREPARED UNDER MY SUPERVISION BY

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Chapter I.

The Passing of the Frontier in Illinois.

In the first half of the nineteenth century when the great wave of immigration swept westward, at first from the southern and eastern states of the Union, but later from far off Ireland and Germany, Illinois received her share. From among the great heterogeneous mass of humanity which came, there arose leaders who were able to guide the destiny of the great state whose opportunities they had come to enjoy. The careers of some of these leaders, because of their long continued influence, form important chapters in Illinois history. Among this class, John Reynolds is perhaps unsurpassed for he was associate justice of the Supreme Court of the state, legislator, governor, and congressman, this whole period of service aggregating twenty-five years. Since he was a man interested and instrumental in the social, economic, and political development of the state, an insight into his activities reveals, at last, certain important phases of Illinois development.

In 1818 when John Reynolds secured his first public office,[1] associate justice of the supreme court of Illinois, the state was still a frontier region. It had made only a mere beginning toward becoming a settled community. Immigrants had not flocked to it as

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1. Reynolds, My Own Times, 211.

they had to Kentucky and Ohio.[1] The two decades previous to 1818, however, had done much for the future of the state. In 1800 the lack of an efficiently organized government, doubtful land titles, Indian troubles, the unsettled status of slavery;[2] and even the very prairie[3] nature of the country seemed to divert immigration into other channels. Before 1818 the perplexing questions of land titles had been cleared up, and lands opened up for sale;[4] and closely allied to this was the securing of the extinguishment of Indian claims in a large part of the state. These and similar acts encouraged immigration and in 1818 Illinois was admitted into the Union as a state. During the years from 1800 to 1818 the population had increased from 2,458 to about 40,000;[5] an indication of the rapid growth of the coming years.

In 1818 the settlements which had been made, were to be found chiefly in the southern part of the state, and even there they were confined for the most part to the margins of the largest rivers.[6] The most of the state was still a wilderness. Fifteen counties had been formed and twelve of them occupied only about one-fifth of the state.[7] The whole northern section was divided into three large counties, Madison, Bond, and Crawford and was for the most part unoccupied except for a few scattered settlements along the banks of the larger rivers. By 1819 Shawneetown, Carmi, Cairo, Edwardsville, and Belleville had been incorporated as cities, and the incorporation of Alton and Vandalia two years later indicated the movement of

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1. Census, 1800: Ill. 2,458; Ohio, 45,363; Ky., 220,955.
2. Ind. Hist. Soc. Pub. II., 455.
3. Ibid, 485.
4. Public Lands I., 741.
5. Reynolds, My Own Times, 209.
6. Reynolds, My Own Times, 176.
7. Blue Book, 1905, p. 407.

population up the Mississippi and Kaskaskia Rivers.[1] These were not large cities to be sure, but they mark the advance of the frontier northward.

These settlements, confined so largely to the southern part of the state were, for the most part, made up of immigrants from the southern states. There was only an occasional settler from New England, and the foreign element was very small. The French influence which had been predominant up to the last of the previous century was becoming lost in the American.[2] The French who had remained in Illinois until this time were not of the better class and so had little influence.[3]

A list of one hundred and six settlers who came to St. Clair and Randolph counties during the period from 1800 to 1818, compiled from the counties' histories, which is probably as representative of the settlers of the period as any list that can be obtained, shows the source of the immigration. Of the one hundred and six, thirty

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1. Blue Book, 1905, p. 439, et seq.
2. Reynolds says, there were about 800 Americans in Ill. in 1800 which is probably not far from correct. (My Own Times, 32 .) A petition written in 1800 by the inhabitants of St. Clair and Randolph counties in regard to slavery contains twenty English names out of a total of One hundred and twenty-six. (Indiana Hist. Soc. Pub. II., 455.) A similar memorial written in 1805 contains one hundred seventy-two American names out of three hundred and fifty. Thus the Americans were rapidly increasing. (Ibid, p.483) A list of marriages solemnized in Randolph county from 1809 to 1811 is given and of this list not more than nine or ten percent are French. (Randolph Co. Hist., 112.) The list of members in the General Assembly in 1812 shows how supreme American Influence had become, (L.H.C. Vol.III., 86).
3. Alvord, Cahokia Records, I. H. C., V. Intro.

percent came from Kentucky, twenty-seven from South Carolina; and about eight percent each from Pennsylvania, Virginia and Tennessee. Since Kentucky was the gateway to other regions, her larger percent is accounted for by immigrants giving their last stopping place as their home. There were probably only a few settlers from New England. Only the nativity of those who became leaders as John M. Peck, from Connecticut, John Messinger of Vermont, and Elias K. Kane from New York,[1] are known. There was no doubt an occasional family from New England such as that at Collinsville in Madison County opposite St. Louis, where the three Collin's brothers from Litchfield, Connecticut, located in 1817.[2] Among the foreign immigrants there is record of a few Germans in Illinois prior to 1818.[3] Two or three German names appear in Cahokia. There were also some Germans in St. Clair County. As early as 1816 a number of Swiss families under the leadership of Leonhard Steiner were settled in that county and gave the name of "Dutch Hill" to their locality. The English settlement in Edwards' County also had its origin in this early period. It was led by Birkback and Flower and many were persuaded to come from England and find new homes in Illinois.[4]

These settlers who came into this great western region with all its varied resources, were men of widely different interests and motives. There were some who came merely for the love of change,[5] or because they loved the freedom and danger of the frontier better than the restrictions of the more settled areas. Others had found

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1. Bateman & Sebly, Hist. Atlas of Illinois.
2. Mathews, Expansion of New England, 206.
3. Faust, German Element, 457-8.
4. Flower's Letters in Thwaite's Early Western Travels, X., 91.
5. Wood's English Prairie in Ibid, 310.

the older states yielded them only a scanty living and came to Illinois to "secure a larger settlement of land than they could ever hope to secure" in the East.[1] Unpleasant social and political relations from which men sought to escape, were in existence in some of the older communities. This was particularly true in foreign lands, and the English troubled by economic conditions at home sought relief by immigration to Edwards' County.[2] There were also certain districts in America, as the uplands of South Carolina where disturbing social relations existed.[3] Settlers came to Illinois to escape from the social ostracism imposed on the lower classes by the aristocratic land holders of that section. But Illinoi offered opportunities for men of a more distinguished class. There were men of education and ability who sought the west because of the great possibilities it afforded for political leadership. Elias K. Kane of New York and Jesse B. Thomas were men of this type.[4] However, there were opportunities in other fields than politics. Men like Peck imbued with the missionary spirit came to the state to become the founders of churches and schools, an indication of the advancing civilization.[5] Although in 1818 Illinois was still a frontier region in the number and character of its settlers, more than a beginning had been made toward its development. The next ten years brought great changes.

While in 1830 there were still numerous examples of all the inconveniences of frontier life, much of the old roughness had worn

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1. Amer. State Pp., Public Lands, I., 256.
2. Sparks, Eng. Set. in Illinois.
3. Schraper, "Sectionalism and Rep. in S. Car." in Amer. Hist. Assn. Report 1900, p. 219.
4. Bateman and Selby, Hist. Encyclopedia of Ill.
5. Reynolds, My Own Times, 429.

off.[1] There were still Indian troubles, lands held without titles, unbridged streams, and regions far from any market, but they did not exist in all parts of the state. Much had been done during the previous decade to free the state from such troubles. The Indians had been pushed northward until for the most part their lands were above a line drawn due west from the southern end of Lake Michigan. A treaty in 1819 with the Kickapoo Indians had secured much of this.[2] By 1832 the United States entered into a treaty with all the various tribes in the northern section to give up all their claims in Illinois; but the Indian problem was not settled until after the Black Hawk War. There was also a dawning of an easier mode of communication: two steam boats were plying on the Illinois River as far as Peoria[3] and rates up stream were about as cheap as those down.[4] As a result of these improvements the whole character of the state seemed better.

Social conditions had also undergone a change. The frontier mode of dress had almost disappeared before 1830.[5] The "raccoon-skin cap, linsey hunting-shirt, buckskin breeches and moccasins" were rarely to be seen. They had given place to the cloth coat, a hat of wool or fur, and boots or shoes. With these changes in dress had come advances along lines of education.[6] The problem of education by state aid was taken up in 1825 and although the provision of taxation for their support was repeated in 1829 as not being in accord with public sentiment its very consideration showed that education had friends and a future before it. By 1830 two

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1. Boggess, Settlement of Ill., 170.
2. Indian Laws & Treaties, 345; 349; 372.
3. Ford, Hist. of Ill., 96.
4. Boggess, Settlement of Illinois, 163.
5. Ford, Hist. of Ill., 94.
6. Boggess, Set. of Ill., 148.

seminaries had been founded in the state; that of Rock Spring established in 1827 by the Baptists under the leadership of Peck;[1] and McKendree College established the following year by the Methodists.[2] Thus by 1830 Illinois was gradually losing its frontier character and increasing in opportunities and attractiveness.

This great change in the character of the state was only possible because of the large immigration of this period. By 1830 the population had increased to 157,445.[3] Fifty counties had been formed, showing a large increase in the central and western sections.[4] Nevertheless as late as 1830 settlers clung to the prairies adjoining the timbered tracts and consequently were still to be found pushing their way northward along the river valleys. Settlements had spread as far up the Illinois river as Peoria; with a few scattered along, often one-hundred miles apart, farther up the river.[5] The region of the Sangamon was found very favorable for settlement and rapidly filled up.[6] The population had also followed up the course of the Mississippi. It was very sparse in places but it extended northward as far as Galena, the center of the lead region.[7] In 1830 Quincy had a population of two-hundred and its very favorable situation for a landing place encouraged settlement in the rich agricultural district back of it.[8] At the same time the eastern section of

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1. Reynolds, My Own Times, 429.
2. Ibid, 431.
3. U. S. Census, 1900.
4. Blue Book, 1905, p. 422.
5. Ford, Hist. of Ill., 102.
6. Reynolds, My Own Times, 237.
7. Ford, 102.
8. Pooley, Settlement of Illinois, 1830-50, p. 400.

Illinois still had large sections unsettled, which was probably due to the apparent inaccessibility of the region.[1] A broad tract of extensive prairie which scarcely afforded wood or water, seemed to the early settler to preclude a possibility of settlement. Two-thirds of the population in the whole eastern section was in Vermilion and Edgar counties in the Wabash river region.[2] In the northeast Chicago had not yet developed; its population probably ranged anywhere from thirty to one-hundred.[3] Andreas in his history of Chicago publishes a list of thirty-two voters who cast their ballots in Chicago in 1830.[4] Its growth came later. It is apparent that the settlement of the state was continuing to be made from the south and was gradually pushing northward through the central part of the state with the river settlements in advance and the adjoining interior filling in as immigration increased.

As Illinois settlement worked up from the south, naturally the majority of the settlers were from the southern states, and yet there was probably even as 1830 a considerable percent of men from the north. In Morgan County, which at that time was one of the river counties, there were twenty-five percent not southerners if such a conclusion may be drawn from the list of three-hundred and eleven settlers who came to the county before 1835.[5] Madison County also shows a number of immigrants from New England and the Middle states.[6] Even on the Illinois and Mississippi rivers, however, the population was largely southern. Quincy had a large number from Kentucky; and the Illinois river region,[7] even as far as Peoria, had large numbers from Kentucky and Tennessee.[8] Although there were

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1. Pooley, Set. of Ill. 1830-50, 401.
2. Boggess, Set. of Ill., 163.
3. Pooley, Set. of Illinois, 476.
4. Andreas, Hist. of Chicago, 112.
5. Hist. of Morgan Co. 321.
6. Hist. of Madison Co. 103.
7. Pooley, 440.
8. Ibid, 400-1.

already some. New Englanders, the great influx of population from that section, did not come until later.[5] It was also true that the foreign population up to 1830 was proportionately small as compared with that of later years. There were a few Germans and Irish who came chiefly to the cities which promised development. There arose also an English settlement in Edwards' County and Englishmen were likewise scattered about in other parts of the state. It was at a later time, however, that the great flood of foreign immigration came. An analysis of the population in 1830 thus shows that although the larger proportion still remained southern there were indications of settlers from the northern states and from Europe who came in vast numbers during the next twenty years.

By the close of the two decades succeeding 1830, Illinois had lost many of its early frontier characteristics. Twenty years wrought many improvements. The troubles arising from land titles and Indian depredations had given place to the questions of banks and the Mormon settlers. After passing through an age of wild speculation and its resulting reaction, the finances of the state had gradually resumed a settled condition. The most serious problems of transportation seemed solved by the introduction of steamers on the lakes and rivers. Railroads were not general but a number were in progress of construction, by the year 1853.[2] Large numbers of new settlers came to change the character of the whole state, and originate that sectionalism, traces of which still exist today.

The settlement after 1830 was largely in the northern section of the state. Large number of immigrants came after the Black Hawk war had made its great opportunities known and the Erie Canal had

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1. Mathews, Expansion of New England, 207.
2. Williams, Trav. Guide & Map.

facilitated transportation from the east.[1] The years 1833 to 1837 were years of speculation and development but were followed by five years of depression, after which immigration again set in, in great numbers. By 1850, the population of the state was 847,524, an increase of four-hundred and thirty-eighty percent in twenty years.[2] The census, which is complete for that year, shows the distinctly new elements in the population. The large number of native born inhabitants, forty percent, indicates the rapid development of the state. The immigration was no longer in such immense proportions from the south. The New England and Middle states surpass it in fournishing settlers. Eight percent of the population of the state came from New York; seven and one-half from Ohio; and five and seven-tenths from Kentucky. That the foreign element had become a distinct feature in the population of 1850, is shown by the large percent in the whole state and especially was this true in the cities. Thirteen percent of the whole population was foreign born.[3] It came chiefly from Great Britain, Ireland, and Germany. One-fifth of the people of Chicago were of Irish descendents, while there were nearly as many Germans.[4] The largest part of the immigration was in the north. Of the cities which had 10,000 or more population in 1900, Peoria, Quincy, Rockford, Bloomington, and Rock Island were all incorporated in the decade from 1840 to 1850, and are all northern cities.[5] Chicago is an example of the most marvelous growth. While in 1830 it had less than two-hundred settlers, by 1850 its population

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1. Mathews, Expansion of New England, 236.
2. Census, 1850.
3. Census, 1850.
4. Seventeen percent were Germans.
5. Blue Book, 1905.

numbered 29,375.[1] The greater part of the state was settled by 1850. It was only where there was a large expanse of prairie as in eastern Illinois or the Military Tract that settlers did not occupy the whole region, until assured of transportation by railroads.

With a predominance of settlers from north of the Mason and Dixon line in northern Illinois and men chiefly from the "cotton states" in the southern part, was laid the basis of a certain sectionalism whose traces still exist. Central Illinois was the common ground where men from both sections intermingled. Governor Ford[2] had contrasted the two types of settlers. The southern settlers he says were "a good, honest, kind, hospitable people, ambitious of wealth and great lovers of ease and social enjoyment." They did not, as a class, represent the "more wealthy; enterprising, intellectual and cultivated people from the slave states." In contrast, "The northern part of the state was settled in the first instance, by wealthy farmers, enterprising merchants, millers, and manufacturers. They made farms, built mills, churches, school-houses, towns and cities; so that although the settlers in the southern part of the state are twenty, thirty, forty, and fifty years in advance, on the score of age, yet are they ten years behind in point of wealth and all the appliances of a higher civilization." The northern section, with its more enterprising class of settlers gradually gained a dominance in the state and the leadership was no longer exclusively southern as it had been in previous years.

The new settlers brought in new elements of civilization. Schools and churches made more rapid advances. Reynolds says that in 1850 there were over one-thousand churches in the state.[3] There was

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1. Census, 1850, p. 41.
2. Ford, Hist. of Illinois, 280.
3. Reynolds, My Own Times, 201.

already a few men in the state who were beginning to take a pride in Illinois history. In 1844, the Historical and Antiquarian society of the state had been formed. There were a few men who even aspired to become men of letters. John M. Peck, Thomas Ford, James Hall, and John Reynolds had all written books before 1860. Governor Ford pointed out in the history he wrote, "It must not be thought that the people of this new country had just sprung up out of the ground with no advantages of education and society. They were nearly all of them from the old states being often the most intelligent and enterprising of their population." They were evidently an enterprising class of people and although they found many needs, and encountered many difficulties, they were proving equal to the occasion.

Although the new elements in the population and the rapid growth of cities might seem to indicate a complete change in the character of the occupations of the state, such was not the case. Illinois was by nature an agricultural region and such it remained. There were in 1850 sixty-five percent of its male inhabitants over fifteen years of age engaged in agriculture.[1] The improved farming conditions made better means of transportation necessary and railroads were chartered. By 1853, there had been constructed a road from Alton to Chicago and one from the city to Galena; and a number of other roads were in construction.[2] This was only a small part of the whole general scheme of improvement for the state.

Such a general survey of the first fifty years of a rapidly developing frontier, must always show astonishing changes. Illinois suddenly found herself transformed as if by magic from a wilderness

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1. Census, 1850.

2. Williams, Trav. Guide, Map.

into a settled state with towns, cities and comfortable farm houses. Illinois of 1818 and Illinois of 1850 were radically different. The influence of a closer communication with the east meant a change in the character of the people, and a resulting change in the problems of the state. The pioneer leaders had no small share in shaping the ends of this prairie state. They made the laws which guided it through its economical and political difficulties; they laid the plans for its social development, and so directed its course that the best of men were attracted within its borders. The results seem to have justified the course of these early Illinois statesmen and reflect credit upon such as can claim a share in shaping the early history of the state. Although the influence of these first statesmen seemed to wane with the passing of frontier conditions, and a new generation of leaders like Lincoln and Douglas came into control, what the first men did as pioneers was none the less important because it seemed to be overshadowed by the greater work which followed it.

Chapter II.

John Reynolds-

"There is a good deal of human nature in people" and naturally John Reynolds closely resembled the men of his times and of all times. He was a Westerner when that section of the country was awakening to its possiblities. He lived in an age of democracy when men were swept into the raging whirl of the pursuit of power. Political power rather than a love of wealth appealed to him and he became a typical politician of his age. He differed from other politicians of his time in degree rather than in kind. His career is the career of many except that it extended over a longer period of time than that of most men, and includes more varied fields of activity.

John Reynolds was a Westerner. He was such from his early childhood. His parents caught sight of "the dim outline of a mountain summit across the ocean" and determined to change their fortunes in Ireland for the greater promises of America. They had come to Pennsylvania in 1785 where three years later, John Reynolds was born. As was the case with many others, they were allured by opportunities in the vast stretches of uncultivated lands beyond the Alleghanies, and left the East for Tennessee. But that state was only the gateway to the West, and by the year 1800, the Reynolds family was again seeking a new home, this time one that was to be permanent. They found it in Illinois in the Kaskaskia region.

As a child of twelve years of age, John Reynolds assisted his parents in cutting a way through fallen trees, and in rafting streams from Lusk's Ferry, where Golconda now stands, up through Illinois to Kaskaskia. A trip which lasted four long weeks. Finally, a site for their home was selected two and one-half miles east of Kaskaskia and John Reynolds says, "we made mathematically, the seventh family in the colony."[1] The first impression of that wild unsettled region lingered in the memory of John Reynolds and in "My Own Times" he says, "it was so strange and uncouth to us, that if we had been landed on another planet, we would not have been more surprised."[2]

Being the sons of one of the earliest pioneers of the Kaskaskia region was no coveted privilege. It meant work, privation and few pleasures. The comforts of civilization had been left behind, and the business of western life was to fell trees, to clear and cultivate lands. The humble homes of these settlers were built amongst the tall prairie grasses in which wolves and other wild creatures prowled nightly. Surrounded by danger and spurred on by the necessity of earning a livlihood this family with many others learned the hardships of pioneer life. But hardships often prove "blessings in disguise" and so these gave an opportunity for the fullest development of energy and independence inherent in the lives of these men whose very pleasures were mingled with work.

While life on the frontier was fitted to develop a strong energetic type of men, there was lacking in it many of the cultural influences of the East. Life in the West meant association with men

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1. Reynolds, My Own Times, 31.

2. Ibid., 30.

of the frontier type, many of whom were accustomed to living on salt-pork, cornbread and whiskey as a daily fare. It meant association with those who enjoyed the more primitive pleasures of fighting and gambling. On the whole there was little refinement or convention in the early settler's homes. Their sterner qualities had been developed by experiences which had a tendency to blunt their finer sensibilities. They had nevertheless, a spirit of sociability and helpfulness which tended to develop within them the broader ideals of honesty, integrity, and kindness of heart even though the finer distinctions of those virtues were unrealized. Such was the community where John Reynolds spent the early years of his life--- the western frontier, a place which had so great an influence on his character. Had John Reynolds lived in a different age, in a different environment, his career would have been impossible. He was a man of his times. The frontier life, more than any other could have been, was conducive to the development of such traits within him that he has been called the"most interesting character of early Illinois history."[1] He was a democrat in a democratic community. There was little prestige from old family records among Illinois settlers; and sufficient time had not elapsed to establish an aristocracy based on wealth. Many had come to avoid the presence of wealth and social distinctions in the older states and felt no desire for them in their new homes. Their ideal was freedom and equal advantages for all. Like the men with whom he associated, John Reynolds was a democrat. He mingled with the people, knew them and trusted them. Gillespie said of him, "To him the voice of people is the voice of God." His Irish lineage

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1. Scott, Supreme Court of Illinois.

gave him that affability of nature which found a fertile soil in which to flourish in a democracy; and which became a first class attribute for a politician of his times. Governor Ford in his History of Illinois has very aptly described the character of the political leaders of his age.[1]

> "The great prevailing principle upon which each party acted in selecting candidates for office was to get popular men. Men who had made themselves agreeable to the people by a continual show of friendship and condescension; men who were loved for their gaiety, cheerfulness, apparent goodness of heart and agreeable manners."

So nearly does this coincide with the description of John Reynolds that Governor Ford might well have had him in mind when he wrote it. John Reynolds himself knew that he possessed these political talents and he was proud of the fact. He said in regard to his relations with the people,[2]

> "I was myself, tolerably well informed in the science of electioneering with the masses. I was raised with the people of the state and was literally one of them. We always acted together and our common instincts, feelings, and interests, were the same."... "I was and am yet, one of the people, and every pulsation of our hearts beats in unison."

This attitude marks him as one who could enjoy electioneering. In a state where newspapers were almost unknown except in a few of the larger towns and where all means of communication was deficient, it was necessary for office seekers to come in personal touch with the people. Before an election he was engaged for months visiting the different sections of the state. In 1829, as a candidate for governor of the state, he was engaged in a most active campaign of electioneering which lasted for more than a year. The letters which

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1. Ford, Hist. of Ill., 282.

2. Reynolds, My Own Times, 297.

he wrote to Governor Edwards at that time bespeak the wonderful energy he expended in permitting no section to be unsolicited.[1] At one time he was making a trip through eastern Illinois in the counties of White and Vermillion; with a return through Shelby and Montgomery where he found the settlers were "new and strange to one another" and "that there was little said on the subject by the common people." At another time, he records a tour of thirty-six days through the Wabash county region. He was ever alert for the least sign of opposition or wavering in support, and was always ready with a remedy. If he received a hearty welcome, he wrote to his friends, "There is an immense current against Kinney here. He will never be able to stem it." If he could feel a lack of enthusiasm it must be told likewise,[2] "I passed through Ferguson's Settlement or Silver Creek and find them halting and doubting more than I expected." As he could feel the reason for their lukewarm feeling, so he knew how to engender a warmth of enthusiasm in them. Perhaps the democrats of Gallatin county required a hand bill to convince them that he was not an "Adam's man"; or it may have been only a letter was needed from Governor Edwards to conciliate some doubtful voter.

During his campaigns, his trips from one place to another were made on horseback and he says while he was canvassing for the governorship he wore out two horses and he himself was worn down to skin and bones. Such a course would have been altogether impossible for a man without an abundance of energy and a familiarity with strenuous exertions. Perhaps a story which was told about him during this canvass will best show the vigor with which he pursued

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1. Washburne, Edward's Papers, 441. et seq.

2. Reynolds, My Own Times, 296.

men. One evening just at dusk when he was passing by a cornfield he saw a figure, "the effigy of a man", and approached it with his usual patronizing manner, "How are you? how are you, my friend? Won't you take some of my hand bills to distribute?" but to his amazement, it proved to be not a man at all, but a scare-crow.[1]

By actually visiting all the various sections of the state he managed to make many friends. He met all men on terms of familiarity. He was called "The Old Ranger" and was very proud of that title. It is said he had become so wellknown by that sobriquet that if a letter had been dropped into any post office in the state it would have gone straight to Governor Reynolds at Belleville. He was wellknown and he was popular. He mingled with the people in a way which gained many friends and convinced men of his democratic feelings, and that in a community which prided itself in its independence, gave a strong supporting beam to his popularity.

> Judge Scott says,[2] "His specialty was as a Friend of the People. In the matter of playing the demagogue before the people he was great. He had no equal in that respect. Some of his opponents had equal disposition to play the demagogue, but they had not the ability to make it a success. In the hands of Governor Reynolds it had a charm that made it a splendid agency in the aid of his political aspirations. It had such a fascination when employed by him, it became respectable in the eyes of many who held it in detestation when attempted to be practiced by others. With him demagogism was a natural endowment equivalent to genius of a high order and by it and through it he achieved greatness."

Perhaps this spirit seemed more respectable in him, since it was more natural to him. Men felt a sincerity in his actions. He was a man who had met experiences similar to those of the people, who had felt

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1. Reynolds, My Own Times, 296.
2. Scott, Ill. Supreme Court, 172.

needs identical to theirs. He felt no repugnance when mingling with the crowd. He felt they appreciated him and he enjoyed their favor. By an energetic personal canvass of the voters, which was both possible and effective in a frontier community, and in which John Reynolds was eminently successful, his career was possible.

John Reynolds did not possess that personal magnetism which marks a great leader. Forquer expressed this lack of one of the qualities of leadership in him when he was reviewing the political situation in 1830 in a letter to Governor Edwards. He says, "He does not seem to me to be the kind of a man to provoke the admiration of the crowd in times of heated party struggles. He is too timid, whilst his enemies are daring, defying, and manly; qualities that are always admired by the populace in proportion as they are ignorant, for their passion, and not sense governs them."[1] He failed to strike out boldly and independently in the political arena. He chose rather to pursue a course mid-way between two extremes, to advocate tried and safe policies. In 1830, when a candidate for governor, he was in the conserative wing of the Jackson party. He says, "I would not be used in the unreasonable and ultra work that many of the Jackson party wanted to pursue at that day.--- Our opponents entertained the ultra, rabid, proscribing spirit while we were more calm and conservative." For this reason he was called the "milk and cider" candidate and as a result of his opposition to the radical democratic party gained many votes from men who became Whigs. He evidently prided himself in his fair-mindedness but it approaches the truth more nearly to say he was "liberal in non-essentials," for he had certain principles which he maintained with a stubborn tenacity.

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1. Washburne, Edwards' Papers, 484.

As a matter of policy, he never condescended to abuse his political opponent and so gave the impression of perfect fairness and sameness. Although he was the head of a very effective political machine, according to his own writing, yet he says,[1] "at no time did I say ought against my opponent; but on the contrary spoke well of him as I had reason to do. I said that he was a natural great man and that the abusive handbills teaming against him were wrong and that I never circulated one, which was the truth. I observed that my friends were as free to act as I was in the canvass, although I did not sanction these malignant circulars; yet I could not restrain them. This conciliatory course gained me votes." He seemed always to emphasize the good will which should exist between members of the two political parties. His speeches were usually prefaced by a conciliatory paragraph, condemning "the violence and rancor we often witness in these party discussions" and insisting that "Each party is composed of American citizens and have equally the good of their common country in charge."[2] This attitude to political opponents gave the impression that he could see other men's view-points and appealed to those who were in quest of a safe and same representative. A good representative he was, but he was not a great leader, for he did not have the genius of a leader.

John Reynolds was not a great orator although he developed a fair ability at speech making. As a lawyer he was never very successful and this was probably due in a large measure to his inability to make a speech well. His first attempt at "stump-speaking," as he terms it, was in 1829 when it became a necessity if he were to

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1. Reynolds, My Own Times, 295.

2. Ill. State Register, July 3, 1840.

succeed in the gubernatorial contest. He says[1], "I was pursuaded to mount the stump; as the people expected it, I did not like it. I made rather a clumsy performance as I considered it to be." No doubt it was a "clumsy performance" when he bore that recollection of it for twenty years. His ability probably increased with practice and he became quite a master hand in making short popular addresses. He was the one chosen to make the eulogy in memory of Governor Ford at a meeting held in Belleville, after his death;[2] and again he made a fitting address upon the death of Colonel Johnson[3] of Kentucky, at a similar assembly. According to contemporaneous newspapers he was present at many meetings of local interests and usually took an active part in discussion, which made his ideas whether on railroads or politics, known to his constituents.

As a member of Congress or of the legislature he was also an active speaker. His addresses, such as are preserved, show a certain tact and diplomacy which bespeaks a mind of keen perceptions. He knew well how to flatter his listeners. In an address on the Cumberland road delivered before Congress in 1836, in a very flattering introduction, he remarked:[4] "Saint Paul said he was 'happy to have the privilege to address a judge who was learned in all the laws and customs of the Jews'. So do 'I think myself happy' to have the honor to present this subject before an assembly that are intelligent, and learned in the laws and constitution of their country." He was able to sound the sentiment of his constituents or his audience and give them what they wished. He was inclined to make his addresses gen-

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1. Reynolds, My Own Times, 294.
2. Belleville Advocate; November 14, 1850.
3. Ibid., January 9, 1851.
4. Gales and Seaton, Reg. of Debates, December, 22, 1836.

eral rather than specific. His promise to voters was most often similar to this one:[1] "I am happy in the reflection, that I have always supported those principles of equality, which secure to every citizen all his privileges and rights, under our consititution, and it will be a pleasure to me to continue to support those principles." Some of his addresses in Congress were very long and often strangely lacking in unity. His address on the "Civil and Diplomatic Appropiation Bill" is very characteristic.[2] In the introduction to his address he warned his listeners that he intended to wander far afield. "I will on this occasion," he began, "though in a very humble manner, enter the prairie of political discussion, in the committee of the whole and pursue the course that may be my own choice. I will do this without giving to the subject before the committee the least consideration whatever." With this introduction, he began a review of the general political situation, turning from that to one of his favorite themes, the origin of the Democratic party in the old Jeffersonian-Republicans, and speaking on and on not forgetting any subjects that were of perennial interest to him. The speeches which he made in Congress however were not of far reaching influence. He was somewhat disappointed in his influence. He reviewed the situation thus,

> "I entered this Congressional career with a determination to perform all I was able for my constituents, and I presumed it would be a good deal. I had been in the habit of effecting many measures in Illinois, and I sincerely believed I would be able to do the same in Congress. I thought some measures were so manifestly right and just- such as reducing the price of the public lands, obtaining appropriations to improve rivers, and the like- that they would be easily accomplished. But when I entered the Halls of Congress, I discovered instantly that this body was much greater than I had supposed, and I could effect less than I had contemplated.[3]"

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1. Alton Spectator, Feb. 25, 1834.
2. Ill. State Regulation, July 3, 1840.
3. Reynolds, My Own Times,448

His ability was small when compared with a Clay or a Webster. NO doubt, John Quincy Adams regretted the time lost, when he recorded in his diary the discussion of the Treasury Note bill was taken up "next by two hours of vulgar, coarse, and silly buffonnery from Reynolds."[1] Undoubtedly, that cultured representative of Massachusetts considered many of the western Democrats as very uncouth both in the measures they advocated and in the manner of their presentation. It was not as a Member of Congress, however, but as a member of the Illinois legislature that he exerted the most influence. It seems quite true that although his ability in oratory would never have made him famous, yet it was a necessary means to his success and a factor of some importance in his career.

Although John Reynolds did not possess the sterling qualities which usually mark men as leaders; nevertheless he had many characteristics which the common man admires. While many of his ideals were similar to those of the common people, he had certain talents which gave him a prëeminence among them. His personal appearance marked him as no ordinary man. Dr. Snyder describes him thus:[2]

> "In stature Governor Reynolds was full six feet high, of stout build, not corpulent but large-boned and muscular, weighing ordinarily about one-hundred and eighty pounds. He was somewhat round shouldered, with one shoulder slightly higher than the other, and walked deliberately, with downcast look, and shambling gait. His face was long, furrowed, and always smoothly shaved, and in repose had a benevolent and reverential expression. His forehead was high, but not broad; his nose straight and well shaped, his eyes blueish-gray and his hair when young, dark brown. He was always gentlemanly in appearance and apparel, with modest but ungraceful manners."

Although he courted popularity he did not gain it at the loss of dignity. Governor Ford says,[3] "he never descended to masquerad-

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1. Adams, Memoirs, I., 414.
2. Snyder, Adam W. Snyder, 299.
3. Ford, Hist. of Ill., 299.

ing in linsey hunting shirt and coonshin cap to gain the rabble's favor; but invariably dressed in well made black clothing of fine texture; with well polished shoes, immaculate white shirt front and high silk hat." His polished exterior undoubtedly inspired a confidence among his associates. Men were flattered and pleased by the friendly attentions of one who appeared worthy of confidence and respect.

It was not only by his personal appearance that he gained respect. He seemed to have the ability also to make what he knew appear to the best advantage. To be sure John Reynolds was not uneducated and yet there are wide variations as to the estimates of the extent of his learning, Linder,"in his Reminiscences of the Early Bench and Bar of Illinois"[1] says that he was well acquainted with John Reynolds having first known him as early as 1836. He says,

> "John Reynolds was somewhat of an odd man and feigned to be illiterate, when in truth he was a ripe scholar (which I have from the best authority) understanding the Greek and Latin perfectly, and being familiar with the ancient classics. He had drunk deeply of the Pierian spring, and had not allowed himself to be intoxicated by shallow draughts. But these accomplishments of his he seemed more disposed to conceal than to blazon forth to the world."

Linder, however, was an early western historian which means that he paints all his pictures in glowing colors. Gillespie who was also a contemporary of John Reynolds, had likewise received the impression that he was an educated man.[2] He writes, "The Governor's dislike to appear to be educated grew out of the contempt the early settlers had for "book larnin". Undoubtedly these men received the

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1. Linder, Reminiscences; Second Edition, 148.

2. Gillespie, Reminiscences, 16.

impression that he disliked to appear educated from his language. Governor Ford writes of John Reynolds,[1]

> "He had passed his life on the frontiers among a frontier people; he had learned all the bye-words, catch words, old sayings and figures of speech invented by vulgar ingenuity and common among a backwoods people; to these he had added a copious supply of his own, and had diligently compounded them all into a language peculiar to himself, which he used on all occasions both public and private."

This peculiarity of language naturally gave men the idea that if he were educated it was not apparent from his speech.

John Reynolds has left a description of his education in "My Own Times."[2] When a boy his education was very defective. There was no school in the neighborhood where he lived and that his training might not be completely lacking, he went during the winter evenings to a neighbor's home where he learned the fundamentals of arithmetic.[3] He was seventeen years old when a school was established in their district and even then it was very uncertain in character because ofnthe scarcity of teachers. At that time, he could attend only on wet days and in the winter season. During the years 1806 and 1807, he was more fortunate and studied land surveying, navigation, reading, spelling, and writing in a seminary northeast of Belleville, which he characterizes as "a good school taught by a competent teacher."[4] It was his college career, however, which gave him his reputation for learning. In his works he names and expresses his appreciation of the Latin writers which he studied in College.

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1. Ford, Hist. of Ill., 106.
2. Reynolds, in My Own Times, 92.
3. Ibid., 93.
4. Ibid., 94.

protect and sustain" Mexico, she would fall a prey either to France or England. Not much foresight seems to have been given in these policies as to what might be the results of their execution, and yet he was probably fully convinced that they were the very best policies.

Reynolds had other special interests which were very characteristic, if they were more local in character. Gillespie says "The Governor was never without a hobby." At times it was securing bounty lands for soldiers, or again the election by vive voce. In the latter principle his democratic ideals came out strongly. The election of officers of an assembly by vive voce was a favorite theme and he proposed it both in the Illinois legislature and in Congress.[1] He believed it was due to the people that were represented "to spread on the journals" the votes of their representatives in all elections. While the people in voting should have the right to exercise that power without any responsibility, "except to their own conscience and to the Supreme Being," according to his view, nevertheless "the situation of the Representative is quite different from his elector." If a representative failed to voice the sentiments of his constituents, he "violated not only the form but the substance of our representative system of government." John Reynolds was such a firm believer in democracy that he even carried that principle further in some of his "hobbies."[2] He even advocated "that the cadets graduated at said institution," meaning West Point, "shall have no preference over other citizens in the appointments of the United States Army."

Such were the measures in which John Reynolds was most inter-

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1. Cong. Globe, 26th Cong. Vol. VIII., 71.

2. Ibid., Vol. VIII., 181.

Judge Scott says of the college which he attended, "Really it was nothing more than a small private school for boys or young men kept by the Reverend Isaac Anderson." He thinks it is probable that what he studied was not more than what is termed a "common school education." Dr. Snyder who also had a personal knowledge of him says,[1]

> "He was well informed and knew something of a great variaty of subjects, but his knowledge of very few of them was clear, thorough or comprehensive. In his intercourse with the people he feigned ignorance not for popular effect, as some of his biographers assert, but to conceal his real ignorance and mask his vanity and self esteem."

It seems whatever John Reynold's education was, his familiar manner and peculiarities of speech gave the impression of an uncouth man. Although Gillespie and Linder believed he was educated, they received from what they believed was "feigned ignorance" the impression of an "unlearned man." John Reynold's wrting is not the work of a cultivated mind, neither in its literary form nor in its substance. If his Latin may be considered as an index to the nature of his college course he had probably received hardly more than a high school training of today. As he seems to have regarded Latin as his specialty this seems a fair test. Why then did his contemporaries receive such an exaggerated impression of his education? The sphere in which John Reynolds chose to move, it must not be forgotten, was a frontier community. There were very few of the mass of people of the state who knew Latin, or who were at all familiar with references to the classics. To be sure there were some exceptions. Ninian Edwards was a man of culture; Coles had received an education at William and Mary's College; Elias K. Kane was a graduate

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1. Snyder, Adam W. Snyder, 304.

Yale. But the clear distinction accorded to these exceptions only serve to prove the rule. The common people, deprived of the advantages of education, could easily have gained an impression of learning even though it might have come from a very superficial knowledge. A few Latin phrases and illustrations were quite enough to give him a reputation for learning among men who did not know a word of Latin. But the fact remains that he was better educated than most men of his times. What today would be "a common education" would in that time have made him a man with some reputation for learning. The fact that he had attended college out of his own state must have been known by his contemporaries and no doubt gave him prestige. Thus his education in some measure explains his popularity.

Such a man was John Reynolds, not a great statesman but rather a true political representative of the people. With talents sufficient to give him a slight superiority among his associates, with tact enough to make him popular among his constituents, he was long their trusted representative. With the confidence in his own power of a selfmade man, he made manifest how proud he was of his own people, by the unbounded energy he expended to advance their interests. He was not a great man for he failed to see himself in his proper relations to other men- he was an egotist. Nature had raised him a little above the horizon but not sufficiently far to give him the broader perspective. His opportunities were not great, but such as they were he made the most of them. He was the pioneer type of politician best fitted to be popular among a pioneer people, a man whose influence waned with the changing conditions.

Chapter III.

John Reynold's Political Career.

The political career of John Reynolds extended over that period in Illinois history when the state was passing through the various stages of its frontier development. The frontier, in American history, has gradually pushed westward and we have seen, that while it had merely reached Illinois in 1818 by 1860 it had passed far beyond. The influence of John Reynolds, consequently, was expended during that period when there was in process of construction the foundation for the "Empire State of the West"; not only that, however, for his long career lasted while there arose much of the structure itself, as well as the foundation upon which it was builded. As Illinois gradually developed, she was drawn into closer union with the country as a whole and came in touch with national problems. In Illinois as elsewhere this was the period of internal improvements, banks, tariff, and territorial expansion, all of which were gradually overshadowed by the more vital questions of slavery and state's rights. These were the problems which received John Reynold's attention and he like the other statesmen of his time attempted to find their solution. He solved them from the standpoint of a western frontiersman whose ideals of government were democracy and state's rights. He was a man who held firmly to the old

Jeffersonian principles and as the nationalistic ideals gained ascendency, gradually grew less and less influential; but his ardor only grew as his hopes seemed farther from realization. His career ended with the close of the great civil war, the final settlement of the slavery and state's rights questions, issues upon which he had expended the most earnest efforts of his life.

Illinois politics in a far greater degree than national politics depended upon personalities rather than issues- before the formation of the Whig and Democratic parties in the state. Up to the year 1828 there were no regular political parties in Illinois.[1] Personalities and not issues were the decisive influences in the determination of the results of an election to a political office. Governor Ford says of the early history of Illinois, "As for principles and measures with the exception of the convention question there were none to contend for. Every election turned upon the fitness and unfitness, the good and bad qualities of the candidates."[2] By 1828 in the presidential election the two opposing parties appeared but in the intervening state elections there were no such sharp party lines. It was not until 1838 that the Whigs and Democrats as such, squarely joined issues in both state and national elections. Up to that time the Whigs and discontented Democrats worked together against the regular Democratic party.

During this era of personal politics, John Reynolds was not a strict party man because there were no hard and fast party lines in Illinois. When he began his career as an office holder in 1818,

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1. Reynolds, My Own Times, 282.

2. Ford, Hist. of Ill., 55.

there were in general two groups of men pitted against each other.[1] Edwards and Bond were leaders. They had undoubtedly made a compromise to work together in 1818 to secure the governorship for Bond and the senatorship for Edwards. This coalition was successful but temporary. By the following year Edwards was supporting Cook for senator while Bond worked for McLean.[2] John Reynolds was allied with Edwards and Cook in that canvass, but like other men of the state, he did not remain consistently with one group of men. By the year 1823, he changed his allegiance to the Bond party. Already in 1822 when Reynolds was a candidate for the senatorship Edwards was probably none too well suited with the plan, but Reynolds considered him among his friends.[3] There are a number of factors which may have influenced John Reynolds to change his political allegeance. He was a supporter of Jackson in 1824 while Edwards was probably an Adam's man. At least, Cook,his son-in-law, and closest associate gave the vote of the state for Adams in that election. But more than that Reynolds was a pro-slavery man. His sympathies had been with slavery from early times and he never changed his convictions. As early as 1805, when a petition was sent from Illinois to Congress asking for the separation of Illinois from Indiana territory and the admission of slavery into Illinois, his name was among the signers.[4] Edwards was not an enthusiastic worker in this contest, and probably sympathized at least with the anti-slavery.***

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1. Washburne, Edwards' Papers, 192. 2. Ibid, 163.
3. Washburne, Edwards Papers, 199.
4. Dunn, "Slavery petitions & papers," in Ind. Hist. Soc. pub.II,485.

***Footnote

At this time Governor Edward's position does not seem very

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***clearly defined. During the contest he was United States senator in Washington and probably did not take an active interest in the campaign, which fact accounts for the differing records of his attitude. Governor Ford lists him with the convention party, (Ford, History of Illinois, 54). While Governor Reynolds speaks of him as an anti-slavery man (Reynolds, My Own Times, 242), it is very probable that had Edwards taken a definite stand he would have favored anti-slavery. Cook and Forquer who were consistently his followers were anti-slavery men. In 1824 Mr. Lippincott, a clergyman and strong anti-slavery man, wrote to Governor Edwards in reviewing the political situation, "Mr. Lockwood and myself as well as others of your friends think it our duty to prevent if possible a collision between different sections and between different sections and will endeavor to keep you out of view in the nomination if we should discover such an opposition as would endanger your election---attempts are making in the country and perhaps more extensively to persuade the people that you are in favor of the introduction of slavery. Every effort will be made by the convention party- or rather the leaders of it, to defeat the election of one they so much fear." (Washburne, Edward's Papers,218 Governor Edwards was considered as a man of strong influence and either party would have been glad to have claimed him, but probably for personal reasons he withheld his support from both sides.

In the year 1824, Illinois was divided into two hostile factions over the slavery question. A heated controversy was waged with able men on both sides. Bond, McLean, Kane and Reynolds all joined forces because they all favored slavery and believed it would be a material benefit to the state. Arrayed against them were strong anti-slavery leaders among whom were Coles, Cook, Hooper Warren, Lippincott, Peck, and Birkbeck the men who were successful in the fight.[1]

It was by the influence of these convention party leaders that John Reynolds was able to secure a seat in the Illinois legislature in 1826. When elected as representative from St. Clair County in that year, he was not altogether inexperienced as a state official. He was a judge of the Illinois Supreme Court from 1818 to 1825 and although he was not eminently successful in that capacity he gained through it some reputation in the state. During the first four years of his legislative career, John Reynolds became a very active member of the Illinois General Assembly. He was influential in proposing and securing the passage of some of the most important measures of this period. It was he who proposed the building of a state penitentiary at Alton. The old whipping post and pillory were to be abolished as punishments and imprisonments were to be substituted. His proposal was adopted and as governor he became instrumental in the execution of his plan. It was during this period that the judiciary was reorganized and the state code of laws were revised. John Reynolds was one of the members of the committee which engaged in this revision, and presented a very thorough and successful piece of work as its long use has attested. He took a very active part in

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1. Ford, Hist. of Ill., 54.

all of the questions which came up before the legislature for discussion. Perhaps no other name appears as often in the journal of the General Assembly of these four years as his. By his ability and activity he established a reputation sufficiently strong to warrant his becoming a candidate for Governor in 1830.

So far, the measures which he advocated were those of his own choice. There were no party-platforms or conventions. He was interested in all forms of development of the state. Education received special attention from him as did all kinds of public works. The era of many factions still existed in 1830 when John Reynolds was a candidate for governor of the state. There were three parties, the radical Jackson, the conservative Jackson, and the anti-Jackson party.[1] When John Reynolds entered the gubernatorial contest in 1830, he was a member of the second group.[2] It was natural for him to join with the more moderate forces and it proved to be the successful policy. In his campaign he tried and proved his power over the people and was elected to the first office of the state.

So far as John Reynold's policy as governor is concerned, he probably maintained the same interests which he had displayed as a member of the legislature. His messages show the same tact in the selection of issues interesting to his constituents, varying from an extensive plan for internal improvements to the conflicting suggestion that taxes should be lowered.[3] The best known event which happened during the four years in which he served as governor and which overshadows less spectacular occurances, was the Black

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1. Washburne, Edwards' Papers, 430.

2. Reynolds, My Own Times, 295.

3. Journal of Ill. Gen. Assembly, 1830, p. 64; 1832, p. 16.

Hawk War.[1] No attempt will be made to give the account of the military side of that war. It will be used merely as an event of some moment in John Reynolds' political career.

Although John Reynolds as chief execution of the state felt responsible for the safety of the citizens, nevertheless he began the Black Hawk War only after due consideration.[2] A number of petitions were sent to him and a delegation visited him, informing him of the danger threatening the people of the Rock River Valley, Whether this danger was the result of the settler's own action, or the Indians were the sole offenders were probably not the questions he considered. It was rather how his administration as governor would be affected by a failure of duty as public opinion saw it; or how he might add the glory of a soldier's success to his increasing political popularity. When once he had decided to make war he pushed forward the campaign with the same determination and energy with which he managed a political campaign. The letter which he wrote to General Clark explaining his course is illustrative of his attitude, in its many sidedness and diplomacy. For one who may read it desiring speedy action, it bears a promise of immediate attack; if a compromise is hoped for, he has a plan whereby war is useless; but through it all there runs that appeal to patriotism which turns the whole into an heroic defense, should war be necessary He says,

> "In order to protect the Citizens of the State, who reside near Rock Island from Indian invasion and depredation, I have considered it necessary to call out a force of the militia of this state of about seven-hundred strong to remove a band of the Sock Indians, who reside now about

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1. Reynolds, My Own Times, 315 et seq.

2. Stephens, Black Hawk War, 81 et seq.

Rock Island.-----

> "As you act as the General Agent of the United States in relation to those Indians, I considered it my duty to inform you of the above call on the Militia, and that, in about fifteen days, a sufficient force will appear before those Indians to remove them dead or alive over to the West side of the Mississippi. But to save all this disagreeable business, perhaps a request from you to them for them to remove to the West side of the River would effect the object of procuring peace to the Citizens of the State.
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> "There is no disposition on the part of the people of this State to injure those unfortunate deluded savage, if they will let us alone, but a Government, that does not protect its Citizens deserves not the name of a Government."[1]

This letter is very characteristic in its tendency to over emphasize John Reynold's part in the contest. He wishes to be considered as the hero who performs the duty of war with reluctance, which he would gladly see settled peaceably; yet if war be what is needed, he plainly accepts the responsibility of his office and will act at once.

In the administration of the two different campaigns of the war, John Reynolds played the part of a diplomat and a politician rather than that of a soldier, and yet his part was necessary. His chief aim, probably was to make matters run smoothly and succeed so grandly that all would add to his reputation as a governor of a great state. Did he appeal for too many soldiers, in terms so enthusiastic that far more came than were needed? A reason for it may be found in his own words, "If I made the call on the volunteers and none turned out, I was a disgraced Governor."[2] Stephen's account of the Black Hawk War, ably describes the part John Reynolds took in the war, a part for which he was very well fitted.[3]

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1. Greene and Alvord, Gov. Letter Books, I. H. C. IV., 165.
2. Reynolds, My Own Times, 329.
3. Stevens, Black Hawk War, 294.

"The age," says Stephens, "was one of independence..... and Governor Reynolds, diplomat that he was in handling western character, was put to the limit of his ability and endurance in smoothing over the difficulties which were needlessly created by this miserable spirit of independence." He gave this love of independence a chance to display itself in permitting the companies to select their own officers, which was in accord with his own democratic ideas; in the same manner he mingled with the soldiers on friendly terms, endeavouring to keep all in good spirits and making himself popular.

Whether the Black Hawk War at this time is considered as a credit or a discredit to those who were responsible for it, at any rate John Reynolds was willing to take all the credit for it. In a moment when his egotism, uncontrolled, led him to forget all criticism of the war, he wrote of it, "And I may say, in an humble manner, as Aeneas said, in narrating the sacking of Troy, to Queen Dido, "a great part of which I was."[1] Although he was criticized during the war he readily forgot all of that in his remembrance of the commendations. After the close of the war the Senate and House of the Illinois General Assembly passed resolutions of commendation on his course in the conflict.[2] This was a fact which he appreciated most thoroughly, and often repeated them with pride, in his political addresses of later years. With his ability to make the most of the situation, the Black Hawk War became a fortunate event in his career. This with his former reputation as soldier in the War of 1812 gave him a remarkable hold upon the people of a frontier state.

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1. Reynolds, My Own Times, 320.
2. Journal of General Assembly, 183.

At the close of his career as governor, John Reynolds left State politics for a time and entered a career as representative in Congress.[1] Up to that time, he had not been a strict party man. As far as national elections were concerned he had always voted the democratic ticket. He says,[2] "I voted for Jackson first, last, and every time he was before the people as a candidate," but his policies were not always in strict accord with those of Jackson. When he was making his canvass before his election as congressman in 1834, he advocated a protective tariff. He addressed his constituents thus, "When it becomes necessary, tariff laws should be enacted, having for their object the protection of manufacturers, as well as to create a revenue."[3] This was clearly protective tariff but it was an opinion formed on very provincial reasoning for he continues, "A part of the tariff policy includes the duty imposed by Congress on foreign salt. In this our state is deeply interested. Should the duty be reduced, the manufacture of salt in Illinois would be abandoned. And on the other hand, should the duty be increased, the price in proportion would be enhanced, both of these extremes would injure the people, and should be avoided." When John Reynolds became a member of Congress, coming in touch with Calhoun and Jackson his opinion was radically changed.[4] When the tariff was under discussion in 1841, he expressed a desire to "add a small drop more to the bucket of free trade." He had come to feel that the protective system was not only "a direct violation of the principles of

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1. Journal of House of Representatives, December, 1834.
2. Reynolds, My Own Times, 253.
3. Alton Spectator, February 25, 1834.
4. Cong. Globe, 27 Cong. Second Session, p. 34.

equity and of equal right," but it was also "in direct violation" of the interests of southern Illinois which was distinctly a farming and grazing community. He was strongly opposed to the West paying what he termed a tribute to enrich the manufacturers of New England. Thus he had readily fallen into line with the democratic free-trade sentiment and found it beneficial to his own section.

As far as the question of banks was concerned, John Reynolds had no change to make in his policy. He had always opposed state banks. As early as 1821 when the bill authorizing the old state bank was brought before the judge and governor who formed the council of revision, he cast his vote in opposition to the bank.[1] When in Congress he voted consistently with the Democrats against the banks.

If there was one question which seemed of more vital interest to the westerner than any other, it was that of internal improvements. It was the one problem which confronted them daily in their actual experience. The want of transportation was the greatest need of Illinois during this whole period. The pioneers of Kansas had to cope with the drougth, those of the Dakotas with cold winters; The Illinois-farmer had no climatic difficulties to meet, his problem was rather how to get his crops marketed after he had raised them. As a westerner and a representative who had the best interests of his constituents at heart, John Reynolds realized the needs of the state. The recommendations he made to the legislature in his messages as governor are largely composed of a discussion of internal improvements. He recommended the building of roads and bridges, the improvement of rivers, the construction of the Illinois-Michigan canal and the Chicago harbor.[2]

1. Reynolds, My Own Times, 224.
2. Journel of Illinois General Assembly, 1832, p. 21.

At that time he believed that "the authority of Congress to make appropriations for works of internal improvement has been generally recognized as a salutary principle of government, derived from a sound construction of the constitution."[1] Internal Improvement at government expense finally became a strong plank in the Whig platform and lost favor with the Democrats. On account of this, probably, such men as Governor Duncan and Casey came to support Whig measures. John Reynolds, however, remained a staunch democrat and vented his enthusiasm while in Congress on the Cumberland Road, which drew support from both parties.[2]

Even on the Cumberland Road issue, his speeches show a changed attitude toward the construction of public works at National expense. He believed that Congress had power to establish military or post-roads wherever or however it saw fit; but he believed that even in regard to the location of the Cumberland Road the individual state had the right to decide. The speech which he made as early as 1836 indicates how deeply imbeded in his mind was the old states' rights theory. He found that even in the location of this road it served his purpose and he brought it forward. He said "the state has assumed the principles and doctrines of States' rights, which I consider are constitutional and correct, and such as can be maintained and demonstrated on a proper exposition of the constitution of our government."[3] Since the constitution gave, in his opinion, "no power to Congress to force on a state such improvements as are contemplated by this national road," he believed that Congress should make the road only as the State decided. John Reynolds favored the

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1. Journal of 8th Gen. Assembly of Illinois, 21.
2. Gales & Seaton's Regulation of Debates,; Cong. Globe, V.8p. 175 ; Ibid., v. 8 p. 181.
3. Gales & Seaton's Reg. of Debates in Cong. 1837, 1131.

Alton route for this road and found in this principle a means whereby he hoped to secure what he believed was best. He saw in the growing power of the national government something to be feared and was ready to join with his party against it. Thus upon these three important issues, John Reynolds fell directly into line with his party even when it meant change in his principles. He prided himself in the fact that he was a member of the Democratic party which was founded upon the ideals of Jefferson. As a loyal party man he supported the Independent Treasury Bill and the Van Buren Administration[1] in spite of their unpopularity.[1]

John Reynolds had another of the earmarks of a typical democrat- he was an expansionist. As early as 1843 he showed his interest in the "Oregon question," as one of the speakers in an "Oregon meeting" which was held in Alton in that year.[2] His ideas in regard to Mexico were the most radical. He favored the Mexican War and to express his commendations of the course the United States followed, he offered a resolution in the Illinois Assembly to that effect.[3] In 1846 he proposed "that the United States have possession of Oregon to Latitude of Forty-Nine degrees north, of California, and of Mexico on both sides of the Rio Grande;" By the year 1858, John Reynolds proposed even going farther to add territory to our nation. Then he wrote "We must have Cuba, and we are forced to have Mexico." This was the period when Mexico was involved in foreign complications and he believed that it was the duty of the United States to uphold the Monroe Doctrine, and "as the trustees of liberty" to annex Mexico.[4] He argued that if the United States failed "to

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1. Ill. State Reg., July 3, 1840
2. Alton Tel. and Dem. Rev. June 24, 1843
3. Journal of Ill. Gen. Assem., 38.
4. John Reynolds, An Address, 1858.

protect and sustain" Mexico, she would fall a pray either to France or England. Not much foresight seems to have been given in these policies as to what might be the results of their execution, and yet he was probably fully convinced that they were the very best policies.

Reynolds had other special interests which were very characteristic, if they were more local in character. Gillespie says "The Governor was never without a hobby." At times it was securing bounty lands for soldiers, or again the election by vive voce. In the latter principle his democratic ideals came out strongly. The election of officers of an assembly by vive voce was a favorite theme and he proposed it both in the Illinois legislature and in Congress.[1] He believed it was due to the people that were represented "to spread on the journals" the votes of their representatives in all elections. While the people in voting should have the right to exercise that power without any responsibility, "except to their own conscience and to the Supreme Being," according to his view, nevertheless "the situation of the Representative is quite different from his elector." If a representative failed to voice the sentiments of his constituents, he "violated not only the form but the substance of our representative system of government." John Reynolds was such a firm believer in democracy that he even carried that principle further in some of his "hobbies."[2] He even advocated "that the cadets graduated at said institution," meaning West Point, "shall have no preference over other citizens in the appointments of the United States Army."

Such were the measures in which John Reynolds was most inter-

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1. Cong. Globe, 26th Cong. Vol. VIII., 71.

2. Ibid., Vol. VIII., 181.

ested while a member of Congress. He served his district as congressman for seven years from 1834 to 1837[1] and again from 1839 to 1843.[2] By the close of his congressional career his influence over the voters of the state seemed to be waning. In 1843, he was defeated in the election by Robert Smith a typical "machine politican."[3] He had been absent from the state during a large part of his service in Congress and was growing out of touch with the people, who were gradually changing in character. He was elected as a member of the Illinois General Assembly in 1846 and again in 1852 but his political power seemed broken. During the years 1852 to 1854, he was honored by being selected speaker of the house. This ends his long period as an office holder. As late as 1858 he was a candidate but it was for State superintendent of schools and he was unsuccessful.[4]

The last fifteen years of Reynold's life, although his "sun had long since passed its noon," were years of activity. His convictions on the slavery question were far too strong and of too long a standing to permit him to remain silent in the great controversy. Already in the year 1854, when he was speaker of the house, Snyder's resolution commending Douglas' support of the Kansas-Nebraska bill was voted upon and John Reynolds cast his vote in favor of the resolution.[5] Following events made a difference in his attitude as it did in that of many others and he became a radical opponent of Douglas and his policy.[6]

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1. Reynolds, My Own Times, 447.
2. Journal of House of Rep.
3. Alton Tel. & Dem. Rev., September 16, 1843.
4. Star of Egypt, October 15, 1858.
5. Jour. of Ill. Gen. Assembly, 1854, 167.
6. Reynolds, The Old Line Democracy Forever, 1858; Sparks, Lincoln Douglas Debates, I. H. C. III., 235.

John Reynolds, as has been shown, had long been a states' rights man. He seldom made a speech in which he failed to emphasize the great difference between the Federalist and Republican parties. "The Federalist party," he insisted, "decided that the government possessed the power to do anything that might be considered to promote the general welfare of the people. The other party assumed no such power, and decided that the general government was limited in its action to a few national objects, and the balance of power retained to the states or the people."[1] He believed that the republican principles had triumphed in the election of Jefferson, and failed to see the strong centralizing influence of Judge Marshall's decisions or the republican's own tendency towards "loose construction" when once they were in control. Although he was jealous of the power of the federal government, nevertheless he had a strong love of the Union. In 1832 he did not sympathize with South Carolina but on the contrary emphasized in his annual message, "All this national happiness is effected by the legitimate union of the states.--- No dangerous doctrine of nulification, tending to dismember this happy confederacy, ought to be countenanced or tolerated.--- This happy union ought and I hope in God, will be sustained at all hazards."[2] Even in 1855, when the slavery question was fast forging ahead of all other issues he feared it as a danger to the Union. The opposition of the execution of the laws of the United States were equally injudicious and treasonable, in his opinion, whether it appeared in the North or in the South.[3] "This subject," he said referring to slavery, "has always engendered bitter feelings among the people and has a tendency to array one section

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1. State Register, July 3, 1840.
2. Journal of Gen. Assembly 1832, p. 24.
3. Reynolds, My Own Times, 425.

of the Union against the other---- The public agitation of the subject of slavery and particularly in the halls of Congress, should be avoided as much as possible."[1] This was the policy to which John Reynolds clung until it was useless. When he realized that the time had come for decision and no amount of remonstrances could silence the agitation he joined zealously in the conflict.

By the year 1858 John Reynolds had become fully alive to the situation. He probably expended the most earnest efforts of his life during the next two years. When his role as a peacemaker failed, with his natural stubborn tenacity it only spurred him on to increased effort. When the break in the democratic party came John Reynolds remained with the branch which continued to support Buchanan's administration. They were the branch who considered themselves as conservative and their policy as the "safe and sane" one. Douglas received a full share of Reynold's hatred, as upon him was laid the blame for the division in the democratic ranks. So vigorous were the attacks which he made upon the Douglas faction, that he became a real aid to Lincoln in his campaign, although their policies were contradictory. It was with reluctance that Reynolds saw the hope of a united democratic party fade into an impossibility as he presented the "Political Olive Branch" as his final plea. It was the last hope he had for saving the Union, a united Democratic party at the ballot box. He had long clung to the hope that the Republicans could not succeed, and although he deeply felt what he thought were the just complaints of the pro-slavery party he pacifically pleads, "We, my friends who love the union, ought not to resort in the first instance, to secession and war for relief."[1] Not 'in

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1. Reynolds, My Own Times, 230.

2. Reynolds, Anti-Insurrection Speech, December 17, 1859.

the first instance" did John Reynolds resort to disunion but when the crisis came his sympathy was with the South.

John Reynolds belonged to that faction who considered negroes an inferior race who enjoyed more prosperity in the hands of a superior class than they could as freemen.[1] To him they were mere property and he rebelled at the idea of the national government interferring with property rights. He saw in emancipation of the slaves a condition which would be unbearable in the South and insisted, "The people cannot and they will not, in the South, withstand such outrages on their constitutional rights and property as to liberate 4,000,000 of slaves in their midst."[2] Thus he strenuously opposed both the Republicans and the Douglas Democrats. When the state convention was held to choose candidates for the Charlestown convention in 1860[3] and Reynolds' party found themselves defeated by Douglas they selected opposing candidates. John Reynolds became one of the "Danite delegates"[4] who proposed contesting their seats. When the convention met, however, the Douglas delegation was accepted and John Reynolds, Cook and Dougherty failed to secure recognition. John Reynolds found himself no longer a great political leader, his period of popularity had passed away.

Baffled in the hope of actual political control, he turned his attention to writing. In "The Balm of Gilead, An Inquiry into the Right of American Slavery" appears his most radical ideas on slavery. This book is almost lacking in his usual pacific tone. Emancipation of the slaves came to be synonymous with disunion. The

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1. Reynolds, An Address, December, 1858.
2. Reynolds, Political Olive Branch, May 26, 1860.
3. Halstead, Nat'l. Polit. Con., 34.
4. Ill. State Register, May 9, 1860.

moral aspect of the question is quite overwhelmed by an attempt "to injure and deprive fifteen states of the Union of their just and legal property, by a band of fanatics. The agitation of the North seemed to him "the wild shouts" of a population who had "no interest in the emancipation of the slaves." "Two publications," he writes, "I will mention whose authors deserve the gallows- 'Uncle Tom's Cabin' and the 'Helper's Book.'"[1] To him slavery was the natural order of things in perfect accord with right and the constitution. His attitude carried him with the South, against his own state when the division came. He became "an unhappy copperhead," one of the class who made Lincoln's hard task of saving the Union far more difficult than it would otherwise have been.

In 1865 ended the life work of one of the most varied careers in Illinois history. The fact that John Reynolds cannot be accounted a great man makes his long career the more remarkable. He was a man of his own time, a leader of that first class of Illinois pioneer farmers who came from the South and never forgot their sympathy for it. He was a man with genius of a certain order and being energetic, ambitious, and tenacious of purpose, he gained his ideal of success. His keen perception and tact gave him the ability to analyze the needs and wishes of the people and make those needs the issues which he advocated. His natural friendliness of manner and powers of diplomacy won for him a popularity among the common people which it was difficult to undermine. He was not only a man of words, but of action as well and was the real moving force in gaining many of the early improvements of the state. With the

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1. Reynolds, Balm of Gilead, 38.

changing state his influence waned. He was no longer the true representative of the people for northern sentiment had come to predominate over Southern. With the change came the transition from personal politics to party lines. As politics crystallized into definite parties he joined with the Democrats, as representing the old Jeffersonian theory of independence of the state and individual. Although his best energy had been expended long before the slavery contest, he threw a second strength into the conflict. He was on the losing side but he believed he had remained true to his old ideals of democracy, and only gave up hope for the Union when those two principles seemed incompatible.

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